

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Family of Alonzo Smith, unarmed Black male killed by DC ‘Special Police,’ calls for UN investigation into his death

WASHINGTON DC, With her faith in Metro Police waning, **Beverly Smith**, the mother of **Alonzo Smith**, the unarmed 27 year old killed by DC ‘**Special Police**’ on November 1st, is calling on the **United Nations** to conduct a ‘truly independent’ investigation into her son’s death. Ms. Smith will make her demand, as well as her intention to exhume her son’s body for a second autopsy, at a press conference beginning at **2:00pm on Tuesday, December 22nd** in front of the **Marbury Plaza apartments, 2300 Good Hope Rd, SE, Washington, DC.**

Alonzo Smith, a 27 year old teacher, was found unarmed, unconscious and not breathing in the early morning hours of November 1st, 2015 at the Marbury Plaza apartments in SE. Multiple residents of the complex called 911 to report a man yelling “Help! Help! They are trying to kill me!” and an ongoing assault. MPD arrived to find Alonzo handcuffed, not breathing and not responding with two DC ‘Special Police,’ one with his knee and full body weight on Alonzo’s back.

Special Police are private police officers, with virtually all of the powers, but few of the responsibilities or oversight, of regular police. The two Special Police involved in Alonzo’s death are employees of a Blackout Investigations, a private security firm contracted by Marbury Plaza.

After initially classifying Alonzo’s death as a “justifiable homicide,” MPD has been slow to release information about the case. Following a series of protests and media scrutiny, MPD have released two body camera videos of MPD police on the scene and the autopsy report has returned from the coroner. The lack of transparency and the national trend of police murders of Black people with impunity has caused Beverly Smith to lose faith in MPD’s ability to lead a fair investigation.

While deaths at the hands of police in other cities has led to calls for investigations led by the US Department of Justice, **Pan-African Community Action(PACA)**, the group organizing recent ‘Justice 4 Zo’ actions, argues federal involvement is futile. “Aside from it’s own history in the Black community, the DOJ has not brought justice to Black communities,” asserts **Max Rameau** of PACA. “DOJ does not charge cops with murder and police departments that come out of DOJ patterns and practices investigations do not change their behavior. There is no benefit to demanding a DOJ investigation.”

PACA is calling for an independent dual track investigation, conducted by the United Nations or the Organization of American States, into both the death of Alonzo Smith and the social and economic conditions that lead to the disproportionate stops, arrests and deaths of Black people at the hands of the police. Black liberation movements in the US have long called for UN investigations into the violation of the human rights of the Black community by the US government, including the National Negro Congress in 1946, We Charge Genocide in 1951 and efforts by Malcolm X to bring the US to the world court in 1964.

PACA is also calling for a civilian board to exercise full community control over police, including setting priorities, policies and the hiring and firing of individual police officers.

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